

A new Ballad intiuled, The stout Cripple of Cornwall,

Wherein is shewed his dissolute life and deserved death.

The tune is, The blind Begger.

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The stout Cripple of Cornwall
The blind Begger

Of a stout Cripple that kept the high way,
And beg'd for his living all time of the day,
A story I'll tell you that pleasant shall be,
The Cripple of Cornwall first named was he.
He crept on his hands and knees up and down,
In a torn Jacket, and a ragged patcht Coloun,
For he had never a Leg to the knee,
The Cripple of Cornwall first named was he,
He was of a stomach courageous and stout,
For he had no cause to complain of the gout,
To go upon stilts most cunning was he,
With a staffe on his neck most gallant to see.
Yea, no good fellowship would he forsake,
Where it in secret a Purse for to take.
His help was as good as any might be,
The Cripple of Cornwall first named was he,
When he upon any service did goe,
The crafty young Cripple provided it so:
His Tools he kept close in an old hollow Tree,
That stood from the City a mile two or three,
Thus all the way long he beg'd for reliefe.
And all the night long he played the false Theefe.
And seven years together this custome kept he,
And no man knew him such a person to be.
There were few Grassiers went on the way,
But unto the Cripple for passage did pay.
And every brave Merchant that he did despy
He emptied their purses ere they passed by.
The noble Lord Courtney both gallant & bold
Rode forth with great plenty of silver and gold,
At Exeter there a purchase to pay
But that the false Cripple his journey did stay.
For why? the false Cripple heard tydings of late,
As he sat for alms at the Noble mans gate,
This is (quoth the Cripple) a boot for me,
And I'll follow closely as closely may be.
Then to his companions the matter he moved,
Which their like actions before time had proved.
They make themselves ready and deely they swear
The monies their own before they come there,
Upon his two stilts the Cripple did mount,
To have the best share it was his full account.
All clothed in Canvas down to the ground.
He took up his place his Pates with him round.
When comes the Lord Courtney with half a score men
Yet little suspecting these theebes in their den,
And they perceiving them come to their hand
In a dark Evening bid them to stand.
Deliber they purse quoth the cripple with speed,
For we be good fellows and therefore have need,
Not so much the Lord Courtney but this I'll tell you,
That in it and wear it else get none of me.

With that the Lord Courtney stood in his defence
And so did his servants but ere they went thence
Two of the true men were slain in the fight,
And four of the Theebes were put to the flight,
And while for their safeguard they ran thus away
The jolly bold Cripple did hold the rest play.
And with his pike staff he wounded them so,
As they were unable to run or to go.
With fighting the Lord Courtney was out of breath
And most of his servants were wounded to death
Then came other horsemen riding so fast,
The Cripple was forced to flee at the last.
And over a River that ran there bestode,
Which was very deep and eighteen foot wide,
With his long staff and his stilts leaped he,
And shifted himself in an old hawthorne tree,
When throughout the Country was heard cry made
To have these Theebes apprehended and staid.
The Cripple he creeps on his hands and his knees
And in the high way great posting he sees,
And as they came riding he begging doth say,
O give me one penny good Masters I pray,
And thus unto Exeter creeps he along,
No man suspecting he had done wrong.
Anon the Lord Courtney he spies in the street,
He comes on to him and he kisses his feet,
Saying God save your honor and keepe you from ill
And from the hands of your Enemies still,
Amen quoth Lord Courtney and therewith flung down
Unto the poor Cripple an English Crown.
Away went the Cripple and thus he did think,
Five hundred pound more will make me to drink
In pain that hue and cry it was made.
They found none of them tho the country was late
But thus cried the Cripple night and day,
That he so unluckily mist of his prey
Five hundred pound this Cripple had got,
By begging and theebing so good was his lot,
A thousand pound he would make it up he said,
And then he would give over his Trade,
But as he strived his mind to fulfill,
In following his actions so lewd and so ill,
At last he was taken the law to suffice,
Condemned and hanged at Exeter Place,
Which made all men amazed to see.
That such an impudent Cripple as he,
Should venture himself to such actions as thes
To rob in such sort upon the high way.

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